THE SEED SOWER.

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EDITED BY

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Happy New Year.

God made our lives to be a song,
Sweet as the music of the spheres,
That still their harmonies prolong
For him that rightly hears.

The heavens and the earth do play
Upon us, if we be in tune;
Winter shouts hoarse his roundelay,
And tender, sweet, sings June.

But oftentimes the songs are pain,
And discord mars our harmonies;
Our strings are dropped from selfish strain,
And harsh hands break the keys.

But God *meant* music; and we may,
If we will keep ourselves in tune,
Hear the whole year sing roundelay,
December answering June.

God still at His great key-board plays,
Harmonies right and discords wrong;
"He that hath ears," and who obeys,
May hear the mystic song.

M. J. SAVAGE.

When will the day bring its pleasure?
When will the night bring its rest?
Reaper and gleaner and thresher,
Peer toward the east and the west:—
The Sower He knoweth, and He knoweth best.

The Christian Ministry.

A SERMON BY THE REV. S. A. BROOKE, M.A.

"Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God."—I. Corinthians iv., 1.

The noblest title of Him who came to show us the way of God was that of "minister." "Cursed be Canaan," said the Old Testament patriarch, "a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren." It is strange how the whole feeling of service being a curse is altered now—how ministering to our brethren has become the blessedness and honour of a man, since Christ has lived and died. "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

To bear witness to that truth in daily life is the duty of every Christian teacher, of every Christian man. The minister is not set apart as the sole doer of such work, he is set apart to represent to men by his life that ministration is *their* work and *their* life; nor is it only in the profession of a minister of the Gospel that Christ's life of service can be lived and preached. He is declared to men by those who live by His spirit. To love like Him, to be gentle, true and kind; to forgive wrong, though we contend against evil; to put aside, not only in large

things but in the little trials of home, our own self, that we may think of others and feel with them and help them; to be faithful to truth, and to die for it if need be; to believe in a Father of righteousness, and to rest as a child upon Him; to finish the work we are given to do—that is to preach Christ Jesus to men, to show forth His life and death till He come. This is our private work; but there is also a public way of preaching Christ. It is to do true service to our brother men. In pursuit of this heavenly toil every soul of man ought to be a minister of God. By whomsover done, without necessarily any connection with a Church, or a sect, or a minister, service of man is service of God. We may be in our profession, in our work, in our place in Parliament, in our office in the city, in whatever thing we do in this world, a preacher of Christ Jesus. When we check abuses; when we defend the weak against the strong; when we sift the truth from bewildering evidence, and deliver the falsely accused or the defrauded; when we heal the sick and cheer the sufferer; when we support or enact a righteous law; when we push forward the education of the poor or promote the health of the city; when we fight for the service of our country—in the name of Him who came to redeem and bless the race—we are preaching Christ; we are His ministers as much, and oftentimes far more, than any self-styled priest. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." To live like Christ, to do Christ's work of doing good, is, in the highest sense, to preach Him unto men.

But there is another sense of the words, with reference to the special profession of the teacher.

The phrase—"to preach Christ"—has become only a phrase on the lips of many. Few words have a nobler meaning; few have been more degraded. To take the living spirit and power out of a thing, to kill it, and having swathed it with the dry speculations and the rigid opinions of a system, to hold this mummy up to the worship of the world, is the work of the Apostles of religious cant. Preaching Christ has been too much altered into preaching a human system about Him. Instead of presenting to us a life warm with human interest, alit with divine love, alive with the energy of faith and activity, we are presented with a scheme of opinions which is called spiritual religion, but which is essentially intellectual, composed of logical subtilties, woven of the fibres of the brain, not of the fibres of the heart. We have endless disquisitions on the infinite nature of sin against an infinite God; on the contest between God's justice and mercy and the difficulty of reconciling them—as if there could be quality of feeling in God; on the divided work of the three persons of the Trinity in redemption; on the legal arrangements of the Atonement — arrangements which an earthiy court of law would brand as cruel and unjust; on the distinction between justification and sanctification; on the extent of the Atonement; on the limits of the love of God. We turn aside weary and deaf, and long for something human and divine together.

This is not to know nothing else but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. It is to know a great deal more.

To preach Him truly, is to take His words and actions, and to show Him as He is from them; to trace the import and the power of His work from Nazareth to Calvary; to present Him to our love as the Son of Man, in whom our humanity is glorified and brought near to God; as one by whom our sufferings and trials were shared, so that He can sympathsise with all the pain of earth, and lead us through trial to victory over evil; to preach Him as the ideal of humanity in whom the whole race is now hidden, and who is, therefore, bound to bring the whole race into union with Himself; to speak of Him as the revealer of the true character of God, the discloser of the Fatherhood of God to the orphanhood of man. To preach Christ is to preach that wondrous love which was the spirit of His life and the motive of His death. It is to preach His filial trust, His unconquered resignation, His unremitting self-devotion; the indignation which scathed hypocrisy; the love which nothing could embitter; the mingled mercy and justice which while it judged redeemed. It is to preach the moral power which subdued the will of the world; the spiritual power which enkindled the heart of the world; the life, which moving like purest light among the storm and stress of men, reproved the evil and aroused the good; which, while it was passed within the world, was separated for ever from the spirit of the world. To preach this,

and much more, till He becomes a living personage in history and a living spirit in our heart, is to preach Christ; and when such preaching flows straight from the heart, it is the highest work which human speech can do. It is the great blessedness of every minister of Christ to lose himself in testifying to his Master.

Again, He was not only the minister whom we are to follow, and to whom we are to bear our witness, but He was also Himself the witness to the Truth. "For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to bear witness unto the Truth."

That is, then, another portion of the work of the Christian minister—to reveal and proclaim universal Truth.

The inspiration of the Bible lies in those portions of it which reveal universal spiritual truths. In spiritual matters it speaks with authority; is exposed only to the spiritual faculty in man; can only be understood by the spiritual faculty. And the proof of that authority is in the universality of the application of these spiritual truths. In science, if a theory explains all the phenomena which can be brought beneath it, it reaps the honour of being called a law of nature. In the realm of the spirit, if a saying is of universal application, and is found to be true at any time, for any man, it can be classed as a universal principle, and is as such true—a direct word or expression of the thought of God.

The second work, then, of the Christian minister is to apply these universal principles to the thought and feeling, the wants and circumstances of the time in which he lives.

But what of the Old Testament? It contains historical and scientific errors. Is the minister to teach from its erroneous pages? The answer is not difficult. We teach from it not historical truth, but spiritual truths of universal import. Take the story of the Tower of Babel. It is quite unhistorical; but are there no spiritual lessons in the tale? Is it nothing to let the world feel that selfishness is the dividing, separating power; that no union on a basis of self-interest can long endure the shocks of avarice and love of power; to have that authoritatively proclaimed as the ruin of national, social, and individual life, and that those who work upon such grounds will find their tongues confounded and their party divided. The fall of every nation, the dissolution of every society, the domestic separations of half the world, are but illustrations of the universal truth preached to us in the fall of Babel—that union of men for selfish ends is a union doomed to dispersal.

We read Ezekiel's prophecy against Tyre, the great commercial city of the East. It is apparently particular, confined to Tyre. The moment we confine its application, we lose the import and power of the prophecy which is not a foretelling of things to come, but a declaration of moral truth. The more you read it in that way the more universal it becomes. It was spoken not to Tyre only as Tyre, but to the moral condition in which Tyre was then existing. As such it is applicable to all commercial nations in the same moral state as Tyre. Read Venice instead of Tyre, and we have the explanation of the fall of the bride of the Adriatic. Read England for Tyre, and we have a warning of the fate which may yet come upon the Queen of the Seas. These are universal principles; to discover them, and to teach them is to be a true steward of the mysteries of God.

Moreover, there is something deeper still. To the man who studies the revelation of God in creation, and the revelation of God in the Bible, there come strange suspicions of a unity of principle in both. If the physical and spiritual worlds both come from God, we ought to find a unity of ideas in them both. They ought to radiate from the same centre, and though they separate at once in detail, we ought to find in them correlative conceptions. Such conceptions we do find, and they form the only ground where science and religion can meet without interfering unjustly with one another's progress.

I give an example of what I mean. All the so-called forces of the universe are different conditions of one energy. The substances and the circumstances in and under which this constant energy appears, make it assume various forms—as light or heat, magnetism or electricity. It is conditioned, in fact, by that through which it passes, but in itself it is for ever constant—never more, and never less.

Is there any idea in the spiritual world parallel to that? Yes. God's spirit is the one, constant spiritual energy. But His energy is conditioned by the character into which He enters, and

becomes prophetic power, that is, power of proclaiming truth, in one man; teaching power in another; love in St. John; moral force in St. James; spiritual freedom in St. Paul; a soldier spirit in St. Peter. Read from the 4th to the 11th verse of xii. chapter of 1st Corinthians, and we find laid down, in almost strict analogy with the physical law, the spiritual law of the correlation of forces. The spiritual and the physical law are the same in *idea*; and it is possible to explain as many difficulties in the mental and spiritual worlds by the one, as are explained in the physical world by the other. Even in the details of explanation there is a strict analogy. The one is as universal in its sphere as the other. It would be a glorious work for a man whose intellect was at home in the sphere of scientific truth, and whose spirit was at home in the sphere of spiritual truth, to bring about on this common ground of deep lying principles that reconciliation between science and religion for which the world is waiting now before its progress can be rapid.

Thus the work of Christ's minister is in fact the same work which is justly allotted to the Bible: first, to bear testimony to Christ; secondly, to reveal universal spiritual truths. Such being the main outlines of the work of a minister of Christ, under what name shall we best describe him? The highest name he can receive is the name of Prophet, one who sees and proclaims universal truth. The prophet is the true ideal of a Christian minister. But the idea of which many persons in England still hold is that of a sacrificing and mediating being who is called the Priest. There is no authority in the Scriptures for Priests in that sense of the word. Except as the name of Christ's enemies the term Priest never occurs in the New Testament as applied to any particular body in the church in distinction from the rest. All Christians are called Kings and Priests to God; all Christians are called a Holy Priesthood; but the offering which they offer is the sacrifice of their life to God's service, an offering which every one can offer for himself without the intervention of another.

Again, the life of Jesus Christ on earth was the life of a Prophet not of a Priest. The spirit of His ministry consumed the sacerdotal caste of the Jews, and with it all the ideas which supported it. He revealed the holiness to the holy heart of every place and every time; He carried out His ministry in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem, and carried it out without any forms, without any ritual. And the Priesthood felt the blow, and hated and slew, as they have done in all ages, the Prophet who shook their tyranny over the souls of men; who dared to open the heavens to the heart of man, and to disclose the heavenly Father to the contrite spirit without the interposition of an intrusive authority.

And it is pretended in this day to keep up that very office which Christ overthrew; that very idea of vicarious reliance on a priesthood which Luther replaced by the idea of personal faith. Men are called upon to go back to Judaism, to lose the fruits of religious freedom bought by so much heroic labour, and to be handed over again, bound hand and foot, into the power of a caste which has always used as its weapons terror, and ignorance, and superstition. Except through them, they say, and their rites, there is no salvation. Without the mediation of the Priest there is no communion of man with God; we are shut out from redemption except through means which the Priest alone can make available for us, except through rites and ceremonies which his hand alone can make effectual. To give way to that is to overthrow all the freedom of the Gospel, all the love of God to man. And in what superstition does it not involve us? We are told that the waving of priestly hands brings down the Holy Spirit through the rite of baptism upon the heart of the child; that the Priest's words of consecration change the substance of the bread and wine. These mere acts of a man, authoritatively performed on a commission from a God—who cannot, it appears, come to us except through certain men and certain forms—have power to produce results which bring a far off God into nearness and union with man. If it can be absolutely proved that God has chosen these acts as the necessary channels of His grace, and has chosen a certain body of men through whom alone they become these channels, then we must submit as well as we can to the miserable results which follow. But if this cannot be proved, then the whole system is superstition. And this superstition runs through the whole theory. A peculiar sanctity is attached to buildings con-

secrated by priestly speech; a peculiar supernatural power is transmitted by the laying on of hands; and to make it more superstitious still, the efficacy of the charm is not disturbed by the possible wickedness of the imposer.

One thing more. The Priest bids me look to the past for all perfection. There, in ages long gone by, was the golden period of the church. There, in a past God, is our hope and faith. There, in the early church, piety, religion, knowledge, religious truth were most perfect and most pure. This continual retrospection makes life a sad effort to recover the relics of lost truth, or a blind clinging to the relics which have been retained. Progress is impossible. We can look forward to no higher revelation, no deeper knowledge, no purer form of Christianity. We are fixed irrevocably to a wheel which spins round and round without moving from its place.

This is a theory of the ministry we should hate, though we should honour many of the saintly men who hold it.

The minister of Christ is a Prophet and not a Priest. He proclaims the truth that God is always in the heart of man; he destroys by the power of that truth every barrier between the soul of man and the Spirit of God; he ignores himself as a mediator, and leaves each individual man alone with the Father of his life. He listens to the confession of guilt or sorrow not in virtue of an office, but in virtue of his fellow humanity; and his absolution is the declaration to the repentant of the fact of his redemption by God the Father. He declares the Fatherhood of God, His salvation, His education of mankind, not as things to be attained by means of certain rites which he alone has authority to perform, but as facts for ever true for every soul, and which the free effort and resignation of the man himself can alone realize as true. He declares that all times are equally holy, all places equally divine, if the spirit of God be in those who are living in the time or abiding in the place. He submits to forms and rites only as necessitated by the weakness of human nature, and the moment they have ceased to be living and to represent truly the idea they originally contained, he abandons them and creates new ones. He abhors the thought of being exalted above his brothers, of being separated from them by an invidious sanctity. To him every man is equally sacred for every man is the child of God, not by right of a superstitious reading of an ordinance, but by right of his belonging to the same humanity as Christ. The worship he teaches is the free, joyful outpouring of a man's own soul direct to the God who dwells in his heart. The spiritual life that he teaches is to be won not through ritual, but through the moral effort of the will; through personal prayer, through God-assisted resistance of temptation; through the certainty and feeling that God's presence and power, and love, and truth, are abiding within his heart.

Lastly, the religion of the Prophet is not in the past, but in the present and the future. He has reverence for the past, but he has greater hopes for the future. His golden age shines before him. He looks with no pale sadness at the colours which the setting sun has left in the sky, but mounts the hill top of faith and strains his sight towards the east to see the new morning dawn. He does not sorrow for what is gone, he aspires to that which is to come. He prays and labours in the present, not that he may attain to a standard of departed holiness, but that he may, as a fellow labourer with God, prepare the world for a higher holiness to come. He believes that nothing has as yet attained perfection, but that all things are going on to perfection. He believes in God the educator of the race to final blessedness, and refusing to join in the owl-like pastime of sitting in the darkness within the ruined temple of the past, goes forth on his path, rejoicing in the growing light, ready for change; for he knows that every change is ordained of God, and is not from good to bad, but from good to better. And far off—inspired by the knowledge of the love of God, and resting on faith in God's everlasting justice—he beholds with increasing and uplifting joy within the great temple of the future, not only the sacred choir of just men made perfect, but the whole race, redeemed, through loving punishment, to faith in Christ, and presented by the Son of Man a perfect Church to God.

There are men who live so thoroughly in the unseen world that they need not the consolation of this visible world.

On Verifying the Compass.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR NEW YEAR'S DAY.

As soon as a ship is ready for sea, or ordered on an expedition, it is the practice to pass her through a preliminary ceremony known by the authorities as "being swung." The ship is not held to be fit for duty until this has been done. It consists in verifying her compasses, whether or no they point aright, or are in some way or other impeded in their operation. Nothing is of so much importance to a vessel as that her compasses should be absolutely trustworthy and work with accuracy. It is a curious and significant fact that however perfect a compass may have been when first made and in the workshop, no sooner is it taken on board ship than a variation occurs. It is said, indeed, that no ship's compass is thoroughly exact, or points truly and precisely to the north, but one will swerve a a degree or two this way and another that. This variation is commonly due to the iron and steel of which the ship is constructed, and which *pull* the compass in one direction or another. Before the ship is suffered to sail this variation must be found out and rectified, or, as is the more usual practice, registered and allowed for. It is obvious if this were not done the ship would be in constant and serious danger.

Does that which you steer by point aright? That is eminently a question for New Year's Day. In beginning another year we make a new venture on the sea of life, and at such a time it is becoming to verify our compass—that is to see that the ideas, affections, principles, aims, by which we direct our course are neither imperfect in themselves, nor misleading by reason of their environment. On the wide, unknown ocean before us, beset with perils from hurricanes and rocks, fraught with consequences infinitely more serious that those the mariner has to face, it is imperative we should be at pains to test, prove, and adjust the ideals we follow and the theories by which we steer our course. It is well to ask ourselves, how far the true principles of living has become warped, or deflected from their exact North by their environment in our busy lives and their conditions. Nothing in heaven or earth can be of so much importance to us as to know whether we are following a true compass, whether that which guides us is in a true line with God.

* * * * *

It is a great thing when a man is resolute to follow conscience. But there are many men who are staunch in following conscience who never ask—Is my conscience pointing due North? For there is a good deal of false concientiousness in the world. It is not only needful that men should follow conscience; it is just as needful that the conscience they follow should be enlightened, wise, and worthy of following. A man may be conscientious over mean things: he may have a morbid conscience, making trivial matters of deportment, diet, and dress great questions of principle. There are men who have provoking, incalculable, not to say cantankerous consciences, which sometimes whisper very odd commands. Many a time a mere caprice or crotchet is taken for the voice of conscience. How conscientious have been religious persecutors in every church. It was conscience heaped up the faggots. These men were true to conscience, but they never thought that their consciences needed enlightenment. They steered by their compass without ever verifying it.

There are two sayings of Bishop Wilson's men would do well to take to heart. "Never go against the light you have," and "Take care that your light is the best you can have." That is, never go against your compass, but see that your compass points true. Many doggedly follow what they think to be right, and so far they do well; but the question arises—Does what they think right happen to be really right? We show energy and persistence in walking by the light we have, but are we sure that our light is not darkness? It is wonderful what people are conscientious about. In religion, they make candles on the altar, and bowing to the east, and fasting on Friday, and the use of incense of as much consequence as doing justly and loving mercy. I once knew an old and saintly minister in Suffolk who had struggled for years on a stipend of £100 a year, and when it was suggested to the principal deacon of the place that it might be well to increase this poor pittance, he replied that he had a conscientious objection to paying ministers of religion large salaries. They ought

to be examples of humility to the flock, and the only way to keep them humble was to keep them poor! It was a curious turn for conscientiousness to take. Almost as absurd as that other deacon who, in the pre-Gladstone days, declined to put claret on his table. *He drew the line at port.* He had a conscientious objection to claret. There was something that savoured of frivolity and worldliness about the wines of France! So while he soaked himself daily with his pint of stupefying port, his conscience would not allow him to give his guests the lighter and more wholesome drink. In such cases there may be the most perfect honesty of mind, but everyone can see that the mind sadly needs instruction. Conscience is obeyed, but it is an ignorant or a prejudiced conscience.

* * * * *

The principle, "Verify your compass," has forty applications. Two or three must now suffice. Our life is governed by some dominant idea, desire, or ideal. Have we proved it? Napoleon the First once ordered a coat of mail that should be pistol-proof. When the artisan had completed it, the Emperor ordered him to put it on himself. Then Napoleon, taking a pistol, fired shot after shot at the artizan in armour. The coat of mail stood the test, and the workman had his reward. Are we prepared to put to the test that guiding rule in which we trust? Is the thing you live for what is called "getting on?" Is that the compass you steer by? And is it a guide so true, so worthy, that in sickness you can find comfort in it, that in bereavement you will be made patient by it, that among the shoals and rocks death you will be led safely by it? Have you verified it by seeing how it stands in relation to the true North of the soul, that is, in relation to God and duty and the great Hereafter?

* * * * *

Another ruling idea of life common among men is the desire to have "a good time;" that is, to get as much ease and pleasure out of life as possible. But will any man say that ease and pleasure and self-indulgence are safe compasses by which to steer the ship of life across the fathomless, stormy ocean? Have you verified your compass by the law of righteousness? Will it stand the test when Christ fires those pistol-shot questions at it—"Have you fed the hungry, clothed the naked, loved mercy, walked justly, laboured for righteousness, loved your neighbour as yourself?"

* * * * *

But with most men it is not that they have chosen for their guiding rule that which is altogether unworthy. They have a sense of duty, a consciousness of God, a love of goodness, a desire for better things than money and ease; they have chosen the commandments of God for their guide, they have taken the law of the Eternal for their compass. But this compass has become warped by the conditions and circumstances of the particular vessel in which it is placed; its needle has swerved aside from the true North, and needs examining, verifying, adjusting. A man has this for one of the points of his compass—"Provide things honest in the sight of all men." But the exigencies of business are such that if he can get rid of some inferior goods by mixing them up with others of a better quality, and no questions are asked, he thinks he is justified in so doing. Or some other of the many shifts and expediencies of business pervert his view of that precept, "Provide things honest." He does not see it to be so absolute as once appeared. Under the convenient formula, "Business is business"—a formula that covers so much that will not bear the search-light of the law of the Eternal—he allows himself in practices which complete honesty would condemn. Yet he would be indignant did anyone question his dealings or his character. He needs to verify his compass, he needs to have his ears opened to the discord between his guiding rule and his actual daily practice.

* * * * *

For the matter of that we all need to purify our ideals, and to tune up to concert pitch the heavenly principles which we have indeed chosen, but which, by reason of the wear and tear of life, the pressure of temptation, the growth of carelessness, have become slack and unstrung. And when should we do this but on these solemn occasions which compel us to pause a moment amid the rush of life, and look—now backward, now forward. At the close of one period of time, at the beginning of another, we

put for a little while into port; we think of the track we have followed, we wonder what the track will be this New Year as we prepare to iaunch forth again upon the mighty deep. There are many things we shall need this coming year, and we shall do well to see that our vessel is well fitted and furnished with these provisions for the voyage. We shall want Vigilance, and Courage, and Gentleness, and Patience, and Promptitude, and Self-denial. But, surely, this we need at the very start more than anything else—to verify our compass, to test our dominant principles, so that in whatsoever scenes we may be cast, whatever storms may come down upon us, whatever fogs endanger our course, there may be no doubt as to where is our true North. Happy will be our lot if, having verified our compass, we are able this coming year to steer right onward, with the stars of Truth and Love and Duty shining in our sky.

JOSEPH WOOD.

Guild News.

THE GUILDS UNION.*—PRIZE ESSAY SCHEME, NOVEMBER 17th, 1902.—In view of the desirability of promoting among the members of our Guilds study of the literature, movements and principles bearing on the culture of the religious life, the development of religious thought, and the growth of our Free Churches, it is proposed to establish a system of Prize Essays on topics announced from time to time by the Guilds Union Committee, and competed for annually, or at other intervals, by members of Guilds affiliated to the Union. The first series of prizes will be awarded for essays sent in before March 31st, 1903. The committee have selected the following subjects, either or all of which may be taken up by any member of a Guild in connection with the Union.

1. The Story of St. Paul. (See "Life and Travels of St. Paul" [*National Society*], 2d.; Stalker's "Life of St Paul" [*T. & T. Clark*], 1s., chapters 3, 5, 6, 9, 10. Also Maclear's Class Book of N. T. History [*Macmillan*], part 2).

2. Richard Baxter. (See B. Herford's "Story of Religion in England," chapter xxv.; A. Gordon's "Heads of English Unitarian History," pp. 55-101; Dict. National Biography, article Baxter).

3. Hymns and Hymn-writers of the 19th Century. (See Campbell's "Hymns and Hymn Makers:" 1s. 6d. [*A. & C. Black*]. V. Davies' "Twelve Hymns," etc. *P. Green*).

Six prizes will be offered in each subject of the value of £1, 15s., 10s., and three of 5s. respectively. The prizes will be given in books selected by the successful writers and approved by the committee. The following conditions must be observed:—

1. The essays must be written on one side of each page only.

2. Any assistance may be given in preparation, but the essay itself must be the sole work of the candidate and in his own handwriting, and should not exceed 4000 words in length nor contain less than 1500.

3. Each essay must have the writer's name, age, and address, with the name of the Guild to which he belongs inscribed on the back of the last page, and must also be certified by the secretary or president of the local Guild as the *bona-fide* work of the sender.

4. Essays must be sent in to the secretary of the Guilds Union, Rev. John Ellis, Mansford Street, Bethnal Green, London, E., by not later than March 31st, 1903.

Examiners in each subject will be appointed by the committee, and the results will be declared at the annual meeting of the Guilds Union in Liverpool during the National Conference week.

It is recommended that where possible classes for the study of these subjects be conducted by some competent person. It will be found helpful to supplement the suggested text-books by oral instruction. It is not intended in the Life of St. Paul that his Epistles should be discussed.

MIDDLESBROUGH.—Our third session commenced on Wednesday, 3rd of September, and is now in full swing. We have added several new members to our roll, and opened up new channels of work. The "Guilds' Manual," which was adopted when first issued, has proved very helpful in the services, and is greatly appreciated. The meetings having proved so helpful and stimulating, the members resolved to meet weekly instead of fortnightly. A Sick Visiting Committee has been formed, with a treasurer, a collection being taken amongst the members of the Union, the first Wednesday in each month. A Sick Fund has also been formed, at the disposal of the committee, who report once a month all cases visited. Cases of sickness, if any, being reported at each meeting are attended to by the committee. A Thrift Fund has also been commenced. The members of the Union have voluntarily undertaken, four each month, to provide flowers for the Communion Table for the church. At the close of each Sunday evening service, the flowers are taken by the Sick Committee to sick persons, each bunch bearing a card printed in red and black, with a neat Oxford border, bearing the words, "With the Good Wishes of the Young People's Religious Union, Christ Church, Middlesbrough." The longer rambles on Saturday afternoons, which our members have enjoyed during the summer, are being continued during the winter by short walks. It is encouraging to notice the heartiness in the meetings, and the zeal and earnestness of the members, who are one and all thoroughly imbued with the spirit of helpfulness.

We win by tenderness; we conquer by forgiveness.

* We again insert the Guilds Union Prize Scheme for the information of new subscribers and Guilds.

HARRIET BEECHER STOWE.

Harriet Beecher Stowe.

[Born (Harriet Elizabeth Beecher) Litchfield, Conn., 14th June, 1812. School at Hartford, as scholar and teacher, 1824-32. Married Rev. Calvin Ellis Stowe 1836. Removed to Andover, where her husband was professor, 1852. Wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 1852. Visited Europe, 1853, 1856, 1859. Wrote *Dred*, 1856. *The Minister's Wooing*, 1859. Removed to Hartford, 1864. *Old Town Folks*, 1869. Husband died 1886. Died 1st July, 1896. *Life* by her son, 1889. *Life and Letters* by Annie Fields, 1897.]

It is just fifty years ago since Mrs. Beecher Stowe sent the last chapter to "The National Era" of her anti-slavery story, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was a work of tears, and prayers, and personal experience, coming from her very heart by a sacred and impassioned purpose, but little did she anticipate its world-wide response. "After sending the last proof sheet to the office," she says, "I sat alone reading Horace Mann's eloquent plea for the young men and women, then about to be consigned to the slave warehouse—a plea impassioned, eloquent, but vain, as all other pleas on that side had ever proved in all courts hitherto. It seemed that there was no hope, that nobody would hear, nobody would read, nobody pity; that this frightful system, which had already pursued its victims into the

Free States, might at last even threaten them in Canada." But all such fears were speedily dispelled. At one quick leap the poor professor's wife became the most applauded woman in the world. Longfellow called her story "one of the greatest triumphs recorded in literary history, to say nothing of the higher triumph of its moral effect."

Of all the "novels with a purpose" which have reached any great success *Uncle Tom's Cabin* certainly heads the list. Did the purpose make the book, or the author create the result? Both played their part. The hour was ripe for a burning note; the writer was there to meet the hour. What was the match that lit the fire? For twenty years had the abolitionists been launching forth pamphlets, speeches, sermons, conventions; the facts were clear on both sides, and argument waxed fast and furious. Yet the conscience of the nation had not yet been touched. But the conscience of one woman was seething with indignation, and only waiting to burst out into expression. It was then that Edward Stowe wrote to his sister: "Now, Hattie if I could use a pen as you can, I would write something that would make this whole nation feel what an accursed thing slavery is." When Mrs. Stowe read this challenge she rose from her chair, crushed the letter in her hand, and declared with determined expression, *I will write something: I will if I live.*

That was the immediate origin of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but the call had come to one who by special inheritance and knowledge was ready to take up the challenge. Generations of puritan ancestors had fired the life blood in her veins with all the forces of righteousness. Her father's fervour, her mother's high sense of duty, her own sensitive moral sense keenly awake to any iniquity, her ever-increasing horror of slavery as its wrongs were witnessed by her own eyes—everything within and without had prepared the way for the prophet who was to speak to the nation's heart. She had lived on the borders of a slave state, seen the cruel sale and separation of a wife, written letters for slave women, helped to ransom a slave child; her husband and brother had escorted a slave fugitive by night, her own house was more than once used as a place of refuge, and the inmates slept with arms within reach. Uncle Tom was a loyal black man, Josiah Henson, who remained in bondage rather than violate a trust; Eliza's escape across the ice with her child was an actual event. No wonder that this book, though in story shape, moved the world and achieved its end.

Dred, which followed four years later, raised her literary reputation higher, especially on this side the water. "Oh, the delight I have had in *Dred*," Harriet Martineau writes, "the genius carries all before it and drowns everything in glorious pleasure. So marked a work claims exemption from every sort of comparison; but as you ask for my opinion of the book, you may like to know that I think it far superior to *Uncle Tom*.

The Minister's Wooing is her most finished production. It is a story dealing with an interesting period, its scene is laid in Channings Newport, Rhode Island, and its leading character is the great theologian of the doctrine of unselfishness, Dr. Samuel Hopkins.

But Mrs. Stowe's enduring hold on fame is that she wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. F.K.F.

The King's Garden in the New Year.

The King's garden, as we might expect, was surprisingly rich and beautiful. Everything was there to please the eye, to delight the ear, and fill the soul with gratitude. There was no lack of anything pure and precious; the wonder of it was unceasing; the mind could not behold all the pictures of grace and interest before it, because they were so many and ever being made new. It spread over the hills and far away down to the borders of the sea, and along to where the land was lost in the circle of the sky, so that it was said no man had gone to the end of it. The seasons were, beyond doubt, as varied as the heart could wish, and brought with them changes of fruit and flower, of tree and shrub, which were a marvel of joy.

The King's children, of course, had all this for their own. It was portioned out to them, so that each had enough and to spare; and each was responsible for the good thus bestowed—he was to care for it and keep it in perpetual beauty. And this was their happiness and reward. It gave them satisfaction and inspiration to toil, to plan and have such success as ever attended them. They built for themselves

homes in happy valleys or on lovely mountain sides, and the world went well with them.

There were three hundred and sixty-five paths leading over the realm; and they walked every year along these pleasant ways, making a circuit as round as the harvest moon. A strange thing it was when you consider it, that they were always eager for the journey. As soon as their feet touched the new way, they were shod with strength to pursue it, roses bloomed at their side, birds sang in the air, brooks came rippling from the hills and quietly stole through the meadows. From morning to sunset visions of gladness met their gaze such as no words can fully express; and then the twilight found them in the happiness of home.

This was romance, you will say, making music of life, letting it run as a poem whose words seek others that follow—because there is the rhyme that completes them! Well, I am aware of this; it was all that, and more. Their souls had a continual feast, their hearts were pure and therefore blessed, and the King had constant communion with them. They saw his signals of goodwill and peace flush the sky morning and evening, and they awoke in his bliss and sought their rest in the beauty of his smile.

Oh! it was wonderful, this idyl of the years. Truly it was like heaven, though found under the shadow of the sky—and all because their hearts were strong and free from bitterness and complaint. They bore with them a charm against what we call sorrow and care. They saw that all things worked together for good, with their faith and hope. How could there be any evil, with their Father to watch over them? They rested in his strength, they assured themselves constantly of his loving interest. They had burdens to bear at times, but they were light because of the power that fed them. They had disappointments, as we name them; but, like the raindrops on the grass, each turned to a gem, and fed the leaf on which it fell.

As they increased in numbers, they increased in joy, because they were taught brotherhood and helpfulness. And this was easy to them, because they knew the treasury of the King was equal to all their needs. One delighted in the good of the other: he extended the right hand of help and friendship most willingly, and it was a fair sight to see.

You say this could not last for ever. Why not? These children never died, strange as it may seem. They had no thought of what we call death, because the world in which they lived was so alive, their thoughts were so alive, their affections were so alive, their whole nature was so loyally blest with assurances of hope, and their Father ever was and ever was to be; and the child enjoys the life and the gifts of the Father. But this befell: when they had known the ways of the garden and seen its summers many years, they were led to the edge of a stream whose path was burnished gold, because it lay near the heart of the sunset, and then upon that glorious tide they passed to islands out near the edge of the sky; others walked to the foot of a hill that seemed dark for a while, and they knocked at an iron gate which noiselessly opened, and then the way was fair as the morning. It was a delightful thought to them, and was looked forward to as the supreme blessing life had to give.

And it is even so to this day, if we would believe it, and true every day; for the King's garden is time, and the King's children are men, and the days are the paths we willingly tread, and age leads to paradise whose beauty surpasses that of the isles of the sea, and is as summer born out of summer, a revelation of the new wonder of our King!—WILLIAM BRUNTON.

Notes and Jottings.

The death of Dr. Parker removes one of the most striking figures among the Free Churches of the country. The tone adopted towards him in many quarters was for a long time one of criticism, which was certainly unfair in its severity. For the present, except for the splenetic outbreak of the *Times*, this is silent, and almost unmeasured adulation has taken its place. Both estimates are probably mistaken. It must be admitted that to many people of the deepest spiritual earnestness he did not appeal at all. To them, his whole style of preaching, with its popular tricks and exaggerated emphasis, was distasteful. On the other hand, that he was a man of genuine power and originality is beyond question. The impression that he made upon a large number of people, who were not

disturbed by his volcanic eruptions and the stageyness of his manner, was deep and lasting; and the memory of his Thursday service at the City Temple remains as a remarkable testimony to his grip and personal force. We should not, however, speak of him as among "the greatest." When compared, for instance, with Spurgeon, he stands on a lower level both in religious fervour and moral simplicity.

We fear that some of our contemporaries are becoming a little forgetful of the reverence and reticence with which sacred things should be treated in the press. We are not safe from the smart literary impressionist even at our prayers. Elaborate descriptions of the funeral services for Dr. Parker appeared in the newspapers, and we are told how one man prayed "with intense feeling," and the voice of another "quivered with emotion," and the quotations are given. Of another minister it is recorded that he "read his first prayer, but his second was *extempore*, and was a passionately earnest supplication." We mention these things because they illustrate a growing habit, against which it is time to make an emphatic protest. They degrade the whole idea of a religious service, and they encourage the popular minister to be self-conscious and to remember the reporters, even when he is pleading with God. It is hard enough for men to preserve their earnestness and simplicity without these temptations of a fussy vulgarity.

The debate on the Education Bill in the House of Lords has been remarkable chiefly for the prominence of the bishops in the debates, and for the complete abandonment of national for denominational interests in our clerical legislators. The only justification for the retention of the bishops in the Lords at all is that in some undefined way they are supposed to represent the higher interests of the State. Their present position as *ex parte* defenders of the privileges of a section, openly avowed and glorified in, would be ludicrous in a democratic nation, were it not occasionally so mischievous. Their safety for the present lies in the political torpor which has overtaken us after the excitements of the South African War.

The Bishop of Hereford made probably the finest speeeh in the whole course of the debates. It is, indeed, seldom that parliamentary oratory reaches so high a level, or ventures to appeal so directly to the noblest motives. The chivalry of his plea for the real interests of education and the religious life of the people was all the more marked by the loneliness of his position. He refused to look upon the bill as a strictly educational measure at all, and described it as "an opportunist political patchwork." His rebuke of the Bishop of London for his depreciation of the value af Bible teaching in the Board Schools was also very timely. "Where," he exclaimed, "did they learn the best lessons of their religious life? At their mother's knee, learning all the beauties of the divine life of Jesus, and they never learnt any lesson so valuable in any school of any kind."

We have heard so much abuse of Undenominationalism lately that words like these from the Bishop of Hereford are most helpful and refreshing. The term is not an agreeable one. It is long, and it is negative; and for these reasons it has fallen an easy prey to shallow sarcasm. But it represents something absolutely precious and vital in itself. Religion does not begin with dogma, but with experience. Christianity rests upon a common basis, and more than this, it is the common things which are most precious and fundamental. Dogmas are being assailed on every hand by criticism. No system of doctrine is as certain as "the beauties of the divine life of Jesus," which are the property of us all. It is a mere travesty of fact to speak of Undenominational teaching as what is left when everything for which men really care has been omitted, and it is only in their controversial moods that men assert anything so preposterous. If we turn to the sphere of either home affection or national character, we are conscious at once of our common ground.

There is, however, some danger that abuse and loud assertion may make us timid about our own convictions in these matters. We do not believe that the State can enforce a common Christianity, or has any right to embody it in an Education Bill. But this is no reason why we

should not preach it, and make strenuous efforts to persuade men to view religion more broadly and deeply. It is no doubt much easier to adopt the popular Denominational cry, and to flaunt an "ism" before the world; but our special work is to be found in a steady resistance to these tendencies, and in faithful witness to a better way. As a sect competing with other sects, our little boat must soon be swamped in the rough waters. As the custodians of a spiritual ideal we may still have a great future when the nightmare of Denominationalism has passed away. It is a good hope with which to go forward into the New Year.

The Religious Objection to Betting and Gambling.

We must often have felt, in denouncing betting and gambling, how easy it is to make objection on one ground and another, and how difficult it is to give a single fundamental reason why they should be condemned. We argue back from certain observed consequences in certain instances, and are surprised to find how far we are from proving that in themselves, apart from their occasional effects, they are essentially wrong. To prove moral guilt, we must show that there has been some violation of moral principle, and this we have not done.

It is sometimes said that in betting and gambling there is a violation of moral principle, because they involve "gain without merit, and gain through another's loss." But, in the first place, there are many forms of unmerited gain, through accidental "increment," which are not thought to be immoral; and, in the second place, in many instances the nominal loser would deny that he had suffered actual loss. The interest and pleasurable excitement of risking a sum which he thinks he can afford to lose is his compensation for losing it. He is never heard to complain that there has not been "a fair exchange."

Sometimes it is argued that to allow human conduct to be determined purely by chance is to dishonour human nature, and that the transference of property without the decision of the will is inconsistent with a right sense of the obligations of citizenship. But the first plea would make so irrational an act as the drawing of lots, or the spinning of a coin, as culpable as the throwing of dice, or the turning up of a card; and, as for the second, in cases where no social injury could be proved, the charge of neglect of social obligation would fail.

It remains for us to see whether higher ground can be taken, whether in betting and gambling violation of religious principle is involved, and whether, for their prevention, religious motive may be supplied. If religious scruple can be suggested, there will be something perhaps with which to touch the conscience of those with whom economic and merely moral considerations have little weight.

But before we reach this higher ground we shall have to deal with certain cases for which exceptional treatment will be asked. There is the case of the steady whist-players, who, the better to play the game, play *with* money, and not exactly *for* money. There is the case of the wagerer, who backs his own judgment and skill without concealment, and there is a contest, and money lost is again a forfeit, and money won is practically earned. There is the case of the professional bookmaker, who so calculates, and so balances his calculations, that, so far as he is concerned, chance rather submits to reason than reason to chance, and chance as a disturbing element is almost removed. And possibly a word may be put in in defence of sweep-stakes, raffles, and lotteries, for in these cases, although chance, and chance alone, is the determining cause, still its effect in the way of loss is so distributed that again, for the individual, it all but disappears.

There are, I imagine, only two ways in which these cases can be honestly dealt with. Either show that they are not cases of betting and gambling, or else as betting and gambling condemn them. For, in questions of religious principle, the question of wrong is not a question of degree and circumstance, but a question of quality and character. If wrong is inherent in the act itself, no consideration of degree or circumstance will drive it out.

For the same reason we must not let any part of the religious argument rest on consideration for "the weaker brother." The weaker brother may rightly be considered in things which are allowable in themselves, but easily indulged in to excess—as eating and

drinking—and for his sake I may abstain from that which is lawful; but in things unlawful I abstain because they are unlawful, and not because he might suffer through my example. If I abstain from betting and gambling only for his sake, I do nothing to make it clear—nor perhaps do I know in my own mind—whether betting and gambling are absolutely or only relatively wrong.

And, lastly, to make our position secure, we must be careful not to fasten upon betting and gambling more blame than that which justly belongs to them. Their occasional connection with unfairness is no criterion by which to judge their character in the abstract.

The religious objection divides itself into two main contentions. First, we may say that betting and gambling are against the spirit of Christian fulfilment of duty to my neighbour and of duty to myself. Christian honour shrinks from the lower qualities of mind and character, from the bluntness of feeling and vulgarity of taste, which play with money seems always to produce. Restlessness, and impatience, and excitability, and contractedness of thought and interest, and sudden changes of mood, and childish belief in personal luck—all these it regards as signs of weakness and lowered self-respect; there can be little courage, it feels, in blind ventures, and no real triumph in successes which no one pretends to deserve. Christian charity will not work ill, either by taking as the winnings of sport the earnings of labour, or by allowing the earnings of labour to be taken as the winnings of sport. It will rather forego pleasure than become indifferent to pain inflicted on another—as often inflicted, ultimately, by good fortune as by ill.

Next we may say that betting and gambling are a breach of our duty towards God, inasmuch as the use of money is a trust, and light and irresponsible handling of money is an abuse of that trust. Moreover, there is nothing which more surely lights the flame of covetousness—that covetousness which is as much forbidden in the New Testament as in the Old.

On this high ground, then, betting and gambling may be condemned; but we must not suppose that with this condemnation all difficulties will disappear. We shall be asked to distinguish between gambling pursued in the name of sport and gambling pursued in the name of commercial speculation. Here we must inquire into the exact nature of the speculation. There are commercial ventures which are distinctly for the good of the community, and, if not always rational, cannot be said to have a demoralising effect. They are, for the most part, made seriously and deliberately. Even in so hazardous an operation as the buying of "futures" the operation may be justified if it can be shown that only by such advance of capital can growers be enabled to cultivate certain crops. On the other hand, the buying and selling of stocks and shares for nothing more than the chance of a "rise" or a "fall" from day to day, can hardly be said to be the discharge of a social function, or in any true sense to be commercial, must from its very nature have a disturbing effect on private life and personal character, and may be ranked with gambling pure and simple, and as gambling condemned.

The high ground is difficult to take, but it is the only ground from which attack can safely and hopefully be made.

E. P. Barrow.

The Seed Sower.

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After ten years of not unsuccessful work the *Seed Sower* begins a new series. During these years it has met with many competitors, most of which are now dead and buried. It has never been subsidised, and occupies an absolutely independent position. But it is a welcome guest in many a Church and home, and we confidently appeal to our friends to make it more widely known. It has only one object—to serve the cause of Liberal Christianity by providing thoughtful literature in a popular form, which may strengthen the faith of the faithful, and enlighten the darkness of the dark.

The *Seed Sower* is admirably adapted for localising, and facilities are provided for that purpose. The circulation is already larger than that of any other magazine or journal published to meet the wants of our Free Churches. It gives a larger amount of matter, and every increase of circulation will be used to secure increased efficiency.

All business communications should be addressed to
MR. ARNOLD WOOD,
Whitehall Chambers, Colmore Row,
Birmingham.

Letters for the Editor to be sent to Gough Road,
ham.

News from the Field.

We begin our record this month with a hearty welcome to the *Rev. J. T. Hardy, B.A.*, who has accepted a call to be assistant to the *Rev. S. Farrington*, at *Richmond*. The new comer is already honourably known among us. He has, for conscience' sake, broken away from the Established Church, and thrown in his lot with our group of Free Churches. The publications which have already come from his pen, and the fine fervid address on "Veracity," which he delivered at the B. and F. meetings in London, stamp him as a man of thought, of culture, and sincerity. We trust that a great career of service is before him.

A word of greeting must be uttered to that brave worker for humanity, *Miss Frances Power Cobbe*, who has reached the great age of fourscore years. It is no wonder that distinguished people of every rank and condition have sent greetings to her. She has won a place in the front rank of moral and philanthropic leadership. Long may she yet be spared to serve her fellow-creatures!

There has been a good deal of activity in a special direction among our churches during the past month. Bazaars and sales of work seem to have been the order of the day. At *Mossley* a sum of £104 was raised; at *Bradford*, where they asked for £200, they got £302; at *Accrington* a sum of £60 was raised; *Knutsford* gathered in £116; and *Upperthorpe, Sheffield*, got the noble sum of £425. There may have been other sales of which we have no note; but these indicate a great amount of activity, especially among the ladies of our churches. Failing a different mode of giving, these bazaars are useful and stimulating.

The Manchester Association is continuing its useful work of visiting its constituent churches. *Heaton Moor* was visited during the past month, and the service and social meeting proved helpful, and were much appreciated.

Activity is being shewn at *Reading*, where our friends have built and opened a new lecture hall and classroom; at *Blackpool*, where the foundation stones have been laid of a new hall on the South Shore; and the congregation at *Shrewsbury* is busy with enlargements and improvements which will prove very serviceable to the active body of worshippers there.

The *Gateshead* people, in connection with other friends in the mission field in the North, have been shewing their appreciation of the able and devoted services of the *Rev. Arthur Harvie* and his energetic wife. Presentations have been made to both of them, and words of encouragement and cheer have been spoken. At this distant outpost many difficulties and discouragements are experienced, but *Mr. Harvie* is a man whose courage never fails, and whose efforts are marked with steady success.

There was a strange incident at *Pudsey* the other day. The minister, a comparative new comer from the Baptist body, suddenly disappeared, and, at a moment's notice, on the Sunday morning left his congregation without a minister. A change of views is said to be the cause, but the escapade shewed a want of judgment and consideration for others which everyone must regret. But if the action was taken in obedience to conscience and a sense of duty, we cannot condemn even so sudden an act.

The *Guilds' Union* have launched a prize-scheme which should offer attractions to our young people, and stimulate them to earnest study.

The *Scottish Unitarian Association*, the *Eastern Union*, and the *South Cheshire Association* have been holding their meetings during the month. The *Scotchmen* rejoice that all their pulpits are now satisfactorily filled, and that progress is being made in the country; the *Eastern Union* have reports of varied successes and failures; and the *South Cheshire* folk are encouraging each other among their outlying Churches, and making each other feel the advantages of mutual counsel and sympathy.

Two notable preachers, among what are called the Evangelical Free Churches, have passed away, amid the tears and regrets of multitudes of their admirers—the *Rev. H. Price Hughes* and *Dr. Parker*. In their way both men were great preachers, though neither of them ranked as an original thinker. They attracted great audiences and created much enthusiasm, and many people will feel a great sense of loss. Neither of them has enriched our literature by any permanent work, but both have largely influenced their contemporaries. We sympathise with our neighbouring Churches in the loss they have sustained.

We notice the return to the active duties of the ministry of the *Rev. Bodell Smith*. He succeeds the *Rev. Noah Green* at *Motteram*, where we trust his efforts may be rewarded with success.

We rejoice to hear of the settlement at Northampton of the *Rev. Arthur Harvie*, late of Gateshead. Our Northampton friends have been a long time in coming to a decision, but we congratulate them on their choice. Mr. Harvie is a man of faith and energy, and we confidently anticipate for him a successful ministry in his new sphere of labour.

We are glad to note the gift to Chorley by Sir W. H. Tate of a new organ in memory of his father, Sir Henry Tate, and his grandfather, the Rev. W. Tate, who for 37 years was minister of the chapel.

The Guild at *Heaton Moor* has held frequent and interesting meetings for the transaction of business, the study of English History, and the reading of good literature. The Social Evenings Committee has arranged several meetings, including that at which Mr. John Harwood recited Dickens' "Christmas Carol," with his usual remarkable ability, on December 10th, when the school-church was well filled.

Two venerable names drop out of our muster roll during the past month. The gracious and gentle lady, *Miss Estlin*, who has for more than fourscore years lived a life of sweetness and beneficence, and added new lustre even to the honoured name she bore. She will be greatly missed. And, at a ripe age, the *Rev J. Panton Ham* has entered into the higher life. He was at one time an attractive preacher, and at all times a scholar and worker. The labourers' work is done. The beloved ones have passed on.

But the world is for living men and women, and we must go forward with hope and courage.

SCRUTATOR.

December 15th, 1902.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Playing at Paradise.

She called to me with dancing eyes,
"We're both turned out of Paradise;
The tree of knowledge was the pear,
That's over in the corner there.

"And, mother dearest, Cousin Jake
Was simply splendid as the snake;
He curved about the trunk; to hiss
He shot his tongue out, just like this.

"He kicked the branches with his feet,
To knock us down some pears to eat;
And when we tasted them, there came
An angel with a sword of flame.

"Bob was the angel, and he said
We must dig thistles for our bread,
And though we digged with toil and pain
He'd make the thistles grow again.

"But, can he, mother? And he says
The orchard's shut to us for days.
Do come and make him let us in,
Because we're sorry for our sin."

I went; and whirling by the gate,
A wooden sword about his pate,
I found our Bob in angel-wise,
Guarding his orchard-paradise.

"Beware the flaming sword!" he cried,
"It turns all ways. Don't come inside."
"Now, Bob, run in," I laughing said,
"It's time all angels went to bed."

NORMAN GALE.

Jack Frost.

The door was shut, as doors should be,
Before you went to bed last night;
Yet Jack Frost has got in, you see,
And left your window silver-white.

He must have waited till you slept,
And not a single word he spoke,
But pencilled o'er the panes, and crept
Away again before you woke.

And now you cannot see the trees
Nor fields that stretch beyond the lane;
But there are fairer things than these,
His fingers traced on every pane.

Rocks and castles towering high;
Hills and dales, and streams and fields;
And knights in armour riding by,
With nodding plumes and shining shields.

And here are little boats, and there
Big ships, with sails spread to the breeze;
And yonder, palm-trees waving fair
On islands set in silver seas.

And butterflies with gauzy wings;
And herds of cows, and flocks of sheep;
And fruit and flowers, and all the things
You see when you are sound asleep.

For, creeping softly underneath
The door, when all the lights are out,
Jack Frost takes every breath you breathe,
And knows the things you think about.

He paints them on the window pane,
In fairy lines with frozen steam;
And when you wake, you see again
The lovely things you saw in dream.

R. L. STEVENSON.

Don't Crowd.

Don't crowd! this world is large enough
For you as well as me:
The doors of art are open wide,
The realm of thought is free.
Of all earth's places you are right
To choose the best you can,
Provided that you do not try
To crowd some other man.

What matter though you scarce can count
Your piles of golden ore,
While he can hardly strive to keep
Gaunt famine from the door!
Of willing hands and honest hearts
Alone should men be proud,
Then give him all the room he needs,
And never try to crowd.

Don't crowd, proud miss! your dainty silk
Will glisten none the less
Because it comes in contact with
A beggar's tattered dress.
This lovely world was never made
For you and me alone:
A pauper has a right to tread
The pathway to a throne.

Don't crowd the good from out your heart
By fostering all that's bad,
But give to every virtue room,—
The best that may be had;
Be each day's record such a one
That you may well be proud,
Give each his right, give each his room,
And never try to crowd.

ALICE CARY.